

(i)

But our "dot" (dot 2) is taken into that A and part 2 of the world, where the number of incoming is constant (1).

**A Letter from a Christian Friend in the Country to another in the City.**

WE had lately sent down into the Country Declarations, from the Protector (so called) and his Council, holding forth the grounds and reasons of their proceedings (as they pretend) for securing the peace of the Common wealth, a thing very plausible to palliate their assumed Power over us and our Posterity.

We may wonder in the first place, at their Nick-naming us a Common-wealth, we being as under the yoke of an Arbitrary power, no better then ear-board *Russian Slaves*, they having by a seeming necessity absolutely overthrown the honour, the sacred and Freedom of the people of *England* by the abolishing of Parliaments, from whence our Fundamental Laws, Liberties, and Privileges derive, deriving of money and Power, Commanding War and Peace by Land and Sea, and making themselves the sole dispensers of guilt or innocence, of Honour and dishonour, of Liberty or Slavery, as in the Case of the *Commonwealth*, from a Tenth and Fifteenth part of Rent and Customs, which they had culd proceed both very much higher in the Country, notwithstanding all their small Reforms, and, in the last pretended securing the pieces of the *Commonwealth* (as they most miserably call it) upon occasion of the late Insurrection and Rebellion against themselves, the *Commonwealth* and most valuable Members, that preserve History, and are to be preserved till the present times, that they have sold the same to us, to us, to us, and to our little *Europe*, that, and I think were very good reasons for it, - leading in their own Conferences, that they have sold the *Grandest Land* and their Country, to wit, these two *Great* *Liberty*, *Liberty* and *Oppression*.

(2)

But our Lot (dear Sir) is fallen into that Age and part of the world, wherein the mystery of Iniquity is working spiri-  
tually, after the working of Satan; with all powers and signs  
and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighte-  
ness, &c. If we do but take a serious view of Antichrist, ei-  
ther as he is the whole body, or as he is this or that part, we  
shall find him in an other garb than the form of a glorious  
Saint, not onely deceiving the blind and ignorant world, but  
as far as is possible even many of the very Elect themselves, that  
which is the fore-runner, or rather occasion, as I may so say,  
(affording the countenance of Gods permissive providence)  
it is not receiving the love of the Truth (nor the protection)  
for how many have professed faith upon a civil and Gospel  
account. How many like Job have marched furiously, that are  
now fallen off, and have with Devils embraced the world?  
How many have declared for Liberty, against Tyranny; who  
are now become as great Oppressors and Oppressors as any?  
How many Gentile self-denies, are become incomparable  
selfishness? How have they in a Saint-like simplicity  
sought to fight the glory and greatness of the world, who  
cannot now be contested with less than Principallities and  
Powers; Nay even with the very Accusers of God himself?  
what species of pretenders were they for the kingdom of Christ,  
who are now become the Imprisoners and Persecutors of the  
Professors of it, and divers other true and faithfull Patriots, I  
mean, Mr. Fooks, Mr. Rogers, Lieut. Gen. Ludlow, M. G. Harrison,  
M. G. Oberine, Col. Rich, Mr. Cary, Quar. M. Gen. Courtney,  
Col. Mordaunt, and others, who by their merits have been  
laid, or laid themselves aside, as Colonel Okey, Coll. Sanders,  
Major Wiggles, &c. Do they not in their Declaration declare,  
one undesign'd, the other designed; indeed the Moderation of  
the words was designed is remarkable, it being disproportion-  
able to the policy they steer by, so tenderly to touch their  
reputation, whose ruines they reach at, their malice being suf-  
ficient to have proved them such offenders, if they could; but  
the service and sufferings of these men, are Arguments invin-  
cible of their Innocence, untill by a fair and legall Tryall, we  
be convinced of the contrary; in the interim, words will not  
make the world believe what was not, neither will their re-  
putation

(3)  
putation by such means be so soon blasted; especially, when they confesse in their Declaration, they onely trust them of-  
fenders.

But suppose these Englishmen had designed some endeavours for the making good their Ingagements; and casting off the yoke of Tyranny; suppose they had invoked or invited the Army (backslidden from the Cause of God and their Country) to return to their obedience, for the confirmation of our just Fundamental laws and Liberties; for the right placing of the Sovereign power of the People, in a lawfull Representative, for relieving the oppressed and imprisoned, who groan for deliverance, from the bondage of these most merclesse Task-Masters; had they not hereby approved themselves brave and publique spirited Patriots; will not such one day be received, with a well done, good and faithfull servants, where their and our, Oppressors shall stand with pale faces, and accusing Consciences, before that God, who will render to every man according to his works, who will appear a swift witness against the swearer and forswearer, who will make inquisition for blood; who will call the Apostates and Hypocrites to account for all their perjuries and oppressions, hath not this ENOUGH the most high God ever signally appeared against the proud and tyrannical Nebuchadnezzars of the world, with all their projectors and Parasites.

In the interim, dear Friend, we may behold as in a glasse our present deplorable condition under a Government (as they call it) where the Will and Interest of a State, Juncto is both law and evidence. At this rate, who may not be a designer and offender, and accordingly declared and punished; who would have believed about eight or ten years since, we should have seen such lawlesse and unparallel'd impious proceedings; who would have imagined that such publique spirits as the persons prementioned, should so carelesly be kept prisoners, by their fellow-servants, who pretended themselves promoters, but have proved perversers of piety and publike liberty, persons of the same spirit with *Strafford, Canterbury, &c.* Nay, far worse, who would have imagined, that our Assertors of Law and Liberty would without Base or Mainprize, not onely Incarcerate the Bodies of our aforesaid Friends, but also deny some of them the comfort of their nearest and dearest relations; a sad requitall

requitall for their severall faithfull services and sufferings, they may in policy pretend what they please; but are not these things most abominable in the eyes of a righteous God, who although he hath an absolute sovereignty over the world, punisheth none before they have sinned, contrary to the laws of the Land, and the very practise of Heathens, who allowed Paul (whom they accounted more dangerous and seditious, then our Friends enemies can say they are.) the enjoyment of his friends, 24. *Act.* 23. And he commanded a Centurian to keep Paul and to let him have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance (much lesse wife and children) to minister or come unto him; yea, further saith *Festus*, the 25. *chap.* 27. v. 'For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withall to signify the crime laid against him. If we must after this manner exchange our just fundamentall laws for their fundamentall reason, I believe when it is too late we may take up the Lamentation of the Prophet *Isa.* 59. 14, 15. 'And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: For truth is fallen in the street, &c. yea, truth faileth, and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey. But let us comfort our selves in this, that our God will cause the pride of the arrogant to cease, lay low the haughtinesse of the terrible, and cut off all that watch for iniquity, that make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought but say our friends adversaries. These men are seditious, dangerous fellows, Railers, and Levellers, &c. so are all who will not sell and sacrifice themselves to work wickednesse: Let a man be of what principle or opinion he please, he is too high or too low, if he cannot play the parasite; if he be sincere, he is a Secretary, if a lover of liberty upon a publique account, he is a Leveller. But was not the (Protector (so called) and many honest men more in the Army and Nation such, when the Army refused to disband at *New Market*: I cannot I protest, but admire that the Protector (so called) his Council or Officers can without blushing make the least mention of levelling, when they themselves are the most monstrous levellers, that ever yet bore the name of Englishmen: Have they not levelled Church and State, King and Parliament, Proprieties, Laws, Liberties, nay, what not? Do they not levell and lay low whatsoever

stands

stands in the way of their Arbitrary Interest, have they not made the most honourable Army in Europe, a crew of mercenary Cut-throats, or Janizaries; have they not under pretence of preserving the publique Peace, cantoniz'd the Countries, appointing so many Major Generals (as they call them) to play *Empson and Dudleys* part, to run in the same path of Oppression, untill perhaps they arrive at their reward. Now for those men to call Levelling a crime, brings them under the condemnation of *Paul*, *Rom. 2. 1. & 3. verses*: 'Therefore thou art inexcusable: O man, whosoever thou art that judgest, for wherein thou judgest another thou condemnest thy self, for thou that judgest doest the same things: And thinkest thou O man that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgement of God. Thou hypocrite, first cast the Beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the Moat out of thy Brothers eye. *Mat. 7. 5.* But the Protectors (so called) great Plea for all his nefarious practices is Necessity, but I suppose this Cloak is worn so third-bare upon all procedures, that even those who are but half-sighted may see through it, how veruall their necessity hath been since the purging of the old Parliament: let us a little consider, First for dissolving of that Parliament they derive their necessity, as they say, from the Parliaments designing to perpetuate themselves, whereas the truth is, they dissolved them, because they were passing a Bill for a New Representative; as some Members our Country-men do to this day affirm. The Necessity for dissolving the Little Parliament was, because they would have regulated the Law, or framed a new Modell, more proportionable to the genius of a Commonwealth, and consistent with the interest of Christ, and done many other good things, for which the Officers of the Army had both Petitioned the former Parliament, and railed against them all the Nation over, because they neglected the doing of them, how truly have they hereby manifested their necessity to be but hypocrisie: Nay is it not plain from the consequence, that these changes were onely designed to usher in a greater; did they not by the reproaches they cast upon the old Parliament, and by their electing men of contrary principles in the other, endeavour to insinuate a necessity for discarding that form of Government.

But



But suppose we should grant a necessity for dissolving the Parliament, yet what necessity is there upon the Nation to countenance an Arbitrary, unlimited power in a Protector, to subvert three Nations by a standing Army of above 60000. men and an ignoble Militia of 10000. Horse in England; doth not true necessity arise from the peoples safety; but how is that made good, when they have no other security for their Lives, Liberties and Properties, then the will of single Person, flanked and fortified with a mercenary Army, and who either is or may be a Tyrant.

Again, what other necessity have they to keep down all Parliaments, but to keep up their boundlesse ambition, what necessity was there when the Nation was almost exhausted by Taxations, to spend 18 or 19. hundred thousand pounds in a fruitlesse expedition to *Hispaniola*, which they are again attempting notwithstanding the Arm of the Lord hath of late been apparently made bare against them in that businesse? Or what necessity is there to imprison and continue imprisoned without tryall (contrary to the Laws of God and this Nation their own voluntary Oathes and engagements) the faithfull servants of God and their Country? May we not hence plainly perceive they make their necessity as boundlesse as their Ambition, as destructive as their desire of Domination? What necessity is there to multiply unparaleld Taxes and impositions, save in pursuance of their private plots and projects, to pick our pockets and purses, that they may the more easily oppress us? we are constrained say some, by oppression and poverty to bind the people unto peace and union, but is not poverty too poor a plant for such fair fruit, as love and union to grow upon; doth not war rather then peace spring from want, which like an armed man is the Herald or Fore-runner of Innovations, surely they that will keep a people peaceable must not make them poor by oppression; we are apt with others wounds to salve our own; plenty stuns men in secure repose, but oppression makes a wise man mad: *Catiline* would never have contrived his Countreys ruine, but to prevent his own; what that there were no such *Catelines* in our new Court, or rather that we had neither Court nor *Cateline*, nor any of that spirit, for which the last Parliament so called was pretendedly dissolved, viz. For that they had an unking tooth against the godly party.

The

The Cries and complaints of the oppressed in this Nation I perceive grown great according to that of the wise-man, *Prov. 29.2.* "When the righteous are in Authority, the people rejoyce, but when the wicked beareth rule the people mourn, men of all ranks and capacities (Army Officers and Courtiers excepted) make this addition to their prayers. "How long Lord, holy and true will it be ere thou aveng, &c. Amongst other causes of this complaint, to speake in the words of *Solomon* 30. *Prov. 22.* it is 'because of a servant when he reigneth.

Your trading I heare in the City is become and likely to continue so dead, that men who have not good stocks are ready to shut up shop. But your Condition in the City I beleve is made better then ours in the Country, in respect both of Landlord and Tenant, the one can scarcely get any rent because the other cannot raise it, Farmers profess they must give up their Farms, because the profit will not ballast the charge of tillage and Taxes: It was the vaine brag of *Cajus Marius* that hee sat in the ruines of Carthage, and is it not the disgrace of our grandees that they are grown great by the ruines of their Country, he was a Heathen and died mad, they are either Christians or hypocrites, and may be more miserable. How doth that heathen Romaine *Cato* shame and out-strip our pretended Christian Patriots? he was as Anxious for the safety and freedom of *Rome* as they are solicitous for themselves; he was as reall a refuge for afflicted virtue as they are oppressors of it. They engaged their lives and souls to get gain, but he laid down his life for liberty, choosing rather to be his Countreys Sacrifice then *Cesars* Slave.

Dear Friend, were all our Courtiers either Christians or *Cato's*, they would rather Conquer for their Country then for themselves; but oh, for what he dyed to preserve, they live to spoil, and prey upon the blood of a whole War; the price of Widdows prayers, and Orphants tears proclaimes their game to be their godlinesse; oh, these are sad fruits of our fourteen years fighting! poverty and oppression are very uncomfortable fruits of Reformation, but dominion impioussly got, must be impioussly kept; one sin must maintain another; yet let us with comfort, consider, that Jehovah is greater then the king of selce countenance and understanding dark sentences, although he may for a time (which we hope is neer an end) by policy cause craft to prosper in his hand, and think to change Times and Laws, yet his Dominion shall be taken away, &c. Did not our Lord in mercy cast the late Kings yolk from off our necks. After that darknesse was dispell'd did not the light of liberty dawne, untill tempestuous clouds arising from the filthy fogs of falshood and treachery, impostumated in the Braines and Bosomes of some few instruments, in the work of Liberty? we were environed with

a more Egyptian darkness then ever, hath not their treachery and our ingratitude urged God to repent of his favours? he sent us light, but we loving darkness rather than light, shut our eyes against the Sun-beams that we might with more modesty sin in secret; He began to restore liberty, but we rather chose servitude: why should we then complain, that we are enslaved in unlimited Monarchy, whilst by a shameful kind of villenage, we bow our servile necks under the basest yoke, and pay our Homage to the most marchlike monsters of mankind, that ever any noble Nation truckled under? Yet dear friend, fear not, freedom will yet fall upon its feet, in the interim pious and publique spirits may be soiled, but not defeated; great and good designs are carried on by orderly additions, but sudden elevations soon decline like abortive Embrioes; believe it our Lord will blast their base enslaving designs, and nip their Multum honours in the bud, Hypocrisie may a little longer act vices part in virtues-apparel, but shall at last fall head long from its greatest height: A tyrants Conscience knows no night of rest, blood in despite of Poppy breaks his sleep, the fears and fury of his fantasy fix death unerring symptoms in his face; despair not, a Tyrants death is the people Antidote, in his own good time, our God will cure the Courtiers itch and avarice, let greatness held by force fear a fall; height and precipitance stand tottering, and know no *Medium* in their Declinations. Whosoever observes the Orthodoxall maxims of our daves need not marvel, that our Marshalists have ravish'd *Astrea* and pull'd justice down; but Christ Jesus will come quickly, and bring his reward with him; the Saints shall sit and see his righteous judgments: Nay, Mr. Feak, Mr. Rogers, &c. shall judge their Oppressors and Persecutors; but I doubt our State professors, who have set themselves over us, do no more believe this truth then *Pilate* when he was judging Christ did believe he was Condemning his judge, or the Jews when they were whipping, persecuting, and imprisoning the Apostles, did thinke to see them sit on twelve Throns, judging the twelve Tribes of *Israel*: do you not know saith *Paul*, That the Saints shall judge the world: 1 Cor. 6. 2. 3. Oh that our carelesse Courtiers and Army men (who with wings impt with the plumes of Oppression and Perjury, soar over us like Eagles of a true *Ayrie*, whilst indeed they are Birds of prey not of *Paradise*) would be now of the same mind, as they will be when they shall see 'the heavens' passe away with a noise, and the Elements melt with fervent heat, &c. But when all is said, 'The wicked will do wickedly, but the wise shall understand and the prudent shall keep silence: Dear Friend farewell, and let us hold fast till our Lord come, Amen.

N. v. m. b.

24. 1655.

Tours co-expectant in the deliverance of Syon  
Ro: Bl.

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